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RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 2045  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 4091  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0308

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 000777

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [BK](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: BOSNIA: RUSSIANS NOT KEEN ON EXTENDING OFFICE OF  
HIGH COMMISSIONER

REF: STATE 20031

Classified By: D/Pol Colin Cleary. Reasons: 1.4(B/D).

¶1. (C) Vadim Gorelov, Chief of the MFA's Bosnia and Herzegovina Affairs Section, told us February 21 that the GOR would not be able agree to extend the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner (OHC) at the February 26-27 Peace Implementations Council's Steering Committee meeting. Gorelov said the GOR would be willing to consider extending the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner (OHC) until November 21, 2007, when the Security Council considers renewal of UNSCR 1722, but would not be willing to extend the OHC until the end of 2007 or until June 2008 unless a "compelling argument" to do so could be made at the PIC meeting.

¶2. (C) Gorelov said the GOR viewed the process of reform in BiH as well underway and challenged the U.S. assessment of the situation. He said Russia would be willing to listen to "clear and concrete" arguments for extending the OHC during the February 26-27 meeting, but noted that the Russian delegation would not be able to respond on the issue at the meeting; the GOR would need more time ("days or weeks") to consider a response.

¶3. (C) Gorelov said the GOR was not alarmed by the sharpened rhetoric coming from the three main ethnic groups in BiH; such exchanges would continue to be a factor in BiH politics and were an improvement over the armed conflict in the nineties. He rejected the argument that the need for police reform was a reason to extend the OHC, as this was being conducted under the purview of the European Union, not the OHC. He added that Kosovo final status should not influence the situation in BiH. In his view, a fair, negotiated settlement on Kosovo -- one that Belgrade could accept -- would not upset the political equilibrium in BiH.  
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